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Audio	Sources
<p>INTRODUCTION:</p> <p>[April 4, 1968. RFK announcement. Before a black audience in Indianapolis.]</p> <p>Robert Kennedy made that stunning announcement followed by a beautiful, impromptu speech as he campaigned for president in 1968.</p> <p>His words are memorialized by this sculpture of the two men reaching out to each other, and exactly two months later, RFK would be assassinated as well.</p> <p>But what no one in the audience knew, what few people in the world knew ... was that Kennedy had personally approved a MASSIVE SURVEILLANCE campaign against King, including wiretaps of his home, office, hotel rooms and colleagues.</p> <p>And as information from those tapes continue to come out, they contain some explosive allegations. And, according to recently uncovered FBI documents ... the most shocking charge is that King looked on and encouraged another preacher as he raped a woman in a hotel room.</p> <p>If you think politics today is extreme, you'll be blown away by how this story unfolds between Kind and the FBI.</p> <p>I'm talking communist spies, break-ins murder, orgies, break-ins, and the U.S. government trying to get King to KILL HIMSELF. It's WILD What I learned is disturbing on a NUMBER of levels.</p> <p>But first, let's revisit the GREATNESS of Martin Luther King, Jr.</p>	<p>Wiki: Landmark for Peace Memorial</p> <p>“On October 10, 1963, U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy committed what is widely viewed as one of the most ignominious acts in modern American history: he authorized the Federal Bureau of Investigation to begin wiretapping the telephones of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.” – The Atlantic</p> <p>Most of the details on the yet-to-be released tapes come from this document: The troubling legacy of Martin Luther King, by biographer David J. Garrow.</p>
<p>SECTION: The FBI vs. King, Part I</p> <p>So why on earth did the Kennedy administration wiretap and follow Martin Luther King and his associates? After all, the Kennedys were solid supporters of the civil rights movement and, publicly, of King himself.</p>	

It started with the fight against communism.

And it's important to understand the times, as well as the power and role of the FBI.

When J. Edgar Hoover took over the agency in 1924, he turned it into the most effective law enforcement machine anywhere. The FBI pioneered things like fingerprinting, forensic science, and criminal profiling ... it set a gold standard in solving crime.

And you can't really separate the FBI from Hoover himself. He took over the agency when he was just 29 years old, and ruled it for 48 years until he died in 1972.

During much of that time, America was in the midst of a cold war with the Soviet, a formidable adversary. That fight was at the heart of the Korean and Vietnam wars, and the world has never come closer to nuclear war than the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The threat was real ... and communists infiltrated the U.S. government and cultural spheres, from spies to Hollywood influencers.

Hoover's crusade against communism was vital for the country's national security, although at times it veered into the realm of obsession ... and corruption.

The FBI collected an enormous amount of surveillance on enemies, as well as on politicians and other powerful people. Hoover used those secret files not only to fight communists, but to maintain HIS OWN POWER as FBI director. Everyone, including presidents, was fearful of being targeted by Hoover.

One of Hoover's targets was this man, Stanley Levison, a lawyer from New York. He was also one of the American Communist Party's top financiers in the 50s.

The communist party was somewhat influential in the U.S. during the 1930s, although that lessened as the Cold War with the Soviets heated up in the 50s. Levison publicly supported the party at first, but in 1956 started hiding his involvement.

That was the same year Levison met a young Martin Luther King, and became one of his closest friends and advisers. Levison negotiated business deals for King,

The Atlantic: [The FBI and Martin Luther King](#)

(Later tapes dispute that Levison really cut ties with the Communist)

prepared his tax returns, and even co-wrote a draft of King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

In 1962, when the Kennedys learned of that relationship and Levison's past, they sent King – who'd become a national leader – numerous warnings through various messengers. When King rebuffed them all, Robert Kennedy, as Attorney General, approved the FBI wiretapping Levison's office.

Later that year, when King was employing ANOTHER man with ties to the communists, the Kennedy administration freaked out a little more and STEPPED UP surveillance. Finally, when a wiretap picked up King referring to Levison as his "friend" and saying that he'd resume connection when things "cooled off" ... that pushed Kennedy into wiretapping King's home and office.

Now, ironically ... throughout all of the wiretaps and informants and everything else ... there's absolutely NOTHING to imply that King sympathized with communism. It was the opposite. He called it an "alien philosophy" contrary to the civil rights movement.

But soon, the FBI wouldn't be focusing on communist ties anymore: they'd be focusing on sex.

The bureau expanded its electronic surveillance to King's hotel rooms on the road, and had at least two of his employees working as paid informants. They tracked his flights and monitored his associates.

And they learned about a lot of sex. Now, King was married, AND a reverend, but the FBI records show numerous recordings of him having affairs, multiple sex partners, and even taking part in mlk.

As this surveillance continued, Hoover's personal feelings towards King grew HATRED. And the FBI's role changed ... from GATHERING information to discrediting and harassing King.

SECTION: COINTELPRO

THAT campaign was part of a broader one called COINTELPRO, which targeted people and groups the FBI considered a threat to national security.

Some of the bureau's activity was CLEARLY illegal as they worked to infiltrate, discredit, and disrupt political organizations in the U.S. These included the Communist Party, the Ku Klux Klan, the Black Panther Party, and others.

The FBI would sow discord in the groups through psychological warfare ... spreading misinformation, creating fake documents, or sending anonymous letters to get people paranoid. They used legal means, sparked IRS audits, down to petty things like setting off fire alarms.

The bureau likely arranged the killing of Fred Hampton, a Black Panther leader, as well as another Panther. An FBI informant had actually DRUGGED Hampton the night before a planned raid ... police fired over 100 rounds, and Hampton was shot at close range. ... in his bed.

With Dr. King, the bureau's goal was to expose and ruin him, and the sex tapes were their weapon. The most INFAMOUS tactic they used was a "suicide letter."

The letter was sent by Assistant FBI Director William Sullivan, who headed the campaign against King. He sent a "best of" audio tape of King's activities, and included a letter as if it was from a disillusioned black supporter. It told King to listen to his "adulterous acts," "sexual orgies," and "evil playmates" ... then suggested that he should kill himself by Christmas or the information would be leaked.

Now for many years, all of this stayed secret. The FBI had tried to plant stories of King's behavior in newspapers, but none of them took the bait. It was a DIFFERENT time then, and things like that just didn't get reported, which was fortunate for both King AND the Kennedys.

And, as crazy as all of this is, here's where the story takes another bizarre turn.

SECTION: "A Citizen's Commission"

On March 8, 1971, Muhammad Ali faced off against Joe Frazier. They called it the Fight of the Century, and was truly one of the biggest events in sports history.

Pretty much everyone was watching or listening to it ... which is why a group of eight activists chose that night to break into a small two-man FBI office in Media, Pennsylvania.

They called themselves the "Citizens' Commission to Investigate the FBI," and they rightly believed the bureau was overstepping its bounds and infringing on American citizens' rights.

The burglars, who were never caught or punished, stole over a thousand classified documents. Their gamble paid off, and they actually FOUND documents that exposed COINTELPRO.

They mailed them to news outlets, but only one of them – the Washington Post – verified them and ran a front-page story.

It set off a national scandal. This wasn't just an overreach by the FBI; it was evidence that the government was willing to shred the Constitution in the name of security.

The scandal contributed to the establishment of the Church Committee, a Senate task force that conducted extensive investigations into the intelligence activities of the FBI, CIA, and . It led to significant reforms ... AND, ironically, led to the discovery and exposure of many recordings of Martin Luther King.

SECTION: David Garrow's discoveries

In 1977, US District Judge John Lewis Smith ordered that ALL electronic surveillance of King be taken OUT of the FBI's hands and given to the National Archives, where it was to be sealed and then made public after 50 years.

But King's sexual encounters didn't come to light because of the FBI, but because of his best friend, Rev. Ralph Abernathy.

By all accounts, Abernathy was King's closest confidant, and the man he named as his successor.

Yet in his 1989 book, "And the Walls Came Tumbling Down" Abernathy gave a sobering account of King's final night before being assassinated. He wrote that King was

[Image I took from Abernathy's book, relevant page.](#)

intimate with two different women that night. A jealous third woman came by in the morning, and an argument escalated into assault.

Abernathy wrote that King “knocked her across the bed...and for a moment they were in a full-blown fight, with Martin clearly winning.”

Civil rights leaders went hard after Abernathy, but he never backed down. I couldn't find an electronic version of the book anywhere on the internet, but I've linked to the relevant pages down below.

Tapes released of First Lady Jackie Kennedy after her death also contained some startling comments.

But years later, as documents were released surrounding President Kennedy's assassination, some of the MLK records ACCIDENTLY SLIPPED onto the National Archive's website. And sat there for two years.

Enter a man named David Garrow.

He's a serious writer and historian, who's concentrated on the civil rights era. His 1986 book on King – “Bearing the Cross” – took him a decade to write, and won the Pulitzer Prize. He's also written one of the definitive biographies of Barack Obama.

Garrow spent weeks pouring through tens of thousands of documents. Many were internal memos or summaries of the FBI tapes, and they were stunning.

The FBI records from many wiretaps, interviews, and surveillance show that they believed King to have been sexually involved with at least 40 women, including prostitutes, threesomes, foursomes, and more. When Coretta King told her husband he wasn't fulfilling his “marital responsibilities,” FBI notes say that King “told her she should go out and have some sexual affairs of her own”.

The FBI files also include allegations that famed baseball player Don Newcombe told the FBI King had fathered a child with his relative, King's long-time girlfriend in Los Angeles.

But the most shocking notes are allegations of what happened in a hotel room in 1964.

Chicago Tribune: [RALPH DAVID ABERNATHY'S BETRAYAL OF HIS TRUSTING FRIEND](#)

People. (Yes, I know, but it was a straightforward, solid account) [A Bitter Battle Erupts Over the Last Hours of Martin Luther King](#)

Again, most of the details on the yet-to-be released tapes come from this document: [The troubling legacy of Martin Luther King](#), by biographer David J. Garrow.

Wikipedia [background on Garrow](#).

Other reporting. Minimal, but some good pieces ...

Independent: [Martin Luther King Jr 'watched and laughed' as woman was raped, secret FBI recordings allege](#)

Atlas Obscura: [Peek Inside the 1977 Report Detailing FBI Misconduct While Surveilling Martin Luther King Jr.](#)

King and his colleagues were staying in the historic Willard Hotel in Washington DC near the White House. The FBI placed transmitters in lamps in two rooms, then set up surveillance teams with receivers and tape recorders in nearby rooms.

In the second bugged room was Logan Kears, a Baltimore pastor, civil rights leader, and King's friend.

The FBI summary says that Kears "had brought to Washington several women 'parishioners' of his church ... the group met in his room and discussed which women among the parishioners would be suitable for natural or unnatural sex acts. When one of the women protested that she did not approve of this, the Baptist minister immediately and forcibly raped her."

On that, Deputy Director Sullivan, or one of his aides, had added, in handwriting, that "King looked on, laughed and offered advice." That's not a minor allegation.

Now, critics have come out and said this proves nothing. These aren't audio tapes, they're not transcripts, just notes from an agency that hated King.

And that's a point to consider. I've gone through hundreds of pages of those records, and they're pretty clearly internal documents, not something designed for public consumption. Garrow makes the point that in the '60s, no one in the FBI would have imagined these notes would have seen the light of day.

That doesn't PROVE they're correct, of course, but they were also reviewed years later within the bureau.

According to Garrow: "Without question Sullivan and his aides had both the microphone-transmitted tape-recording, and a subsequent full transcript at hand while they were annotating their existing typescript; in 1977 Justice Department investigators would publicly attest to how their own review of both the tapes and the transcripts showed them to be genuine and accurate."

The reports continue on to say that the next night at the Willard Hotel, King was part of an orgy with about a dozen people.

"When one of the women shied away from engaging in an unnatural act, King and several of the men discussed how

Yahoo News UK: [Martin Luther King 'looked on and laughed' while friend raped woman, unsealed FBI documents claim](#)

Politico: [How to Make Sense of the Shocking New MLK Documents](#)

The Conversation: [I'm an MLK scholar – and I'll never be able to view King in the same light](#)

[All of Garrow's MLK stories.](#)

[Full FBI file release. Lots of documents here.](#)

she was to be taught and initiated in this respect. King told her that to perform such an act would 'help your soul'."

Now, an "unnatural act" can probably be a whole lot of things, but, again, according to the FBI notes, "King announced that he preferred to perform unnatural acts on women and that he had started the 'International Association for the Advancement of Pussy Eaters'."

Garrow writes that "Anyone familiar with King's often-bawdy sense of humor would not doubt that quotation."

When Garrow wrote up these explosive allegations – in 2019 when "Me Too" was in full swing – the media reaction was, let's just say ... restrained.

Multiple outlets rejected it. After it was published, most ignored it completely. Others made sure to pack their stories with doubtful historians rather than seeking actual facts.

The New York Times did that, and also dredged up a time when Garrow lost his temper and allegedly grabbed a woman's wrist twenty years beforehand. The paper found a feminist to say that exposing King's female companions was sexist in and of itself, and even mention that .

Ultimately, we should hear the whole truth in January of 2027, when the audio tapes are scheduled to be released. Given King's popularity, I wouldn't be surprised if there's a legal challenge, but that's where it stands now.

And to be clear, King's popularity is entirely justified.

When I told a good friend of mine about the topic of this video, he was like, "Why would you do that??"

And it was a GOOD question. I don't take pleasure in tearing down our heroes. Of course, it makes us ask, if these charges are true – SHOULD he be our hero?

New York Times: [His Martin Luther King Biography Was a Classic. His Latest King Piece Is Causing a Furor.](#)

CONCLUSION: How do we evaluate flawed people?

We've recently seen a reckoning with the flawed lives of many celebrated Americans.

Statues and monuments to leaders and former presidents like Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, were removed by governments or torn down by protestors ... not for their political acts but for what we now see as their moral shortcomings.

Should Dr. King's personal failings put him in that category? Should disgraceful private acts negate the public good someone has done?

Maybe the real takeaway here is that even our most admired heroes are imperfect human beings. Despite their failings, the founding fathers – including Dr. King – dedicated themselves to building a better world, and that seems worth celebrating.

I'm Ken LaCorte. I do my best here to give you a balanced, in-depth look at some delicate subjects.

If I screw up, I'll post corrections in a pinned post.

Thanks for watching Until next time.